

# At/on/in (Time)

## A

Compare at, on, and in:

- They arrived at 5:00.
- They arrived on Friday.
- They arrived in October. / They arrived in 1998.

We use:

at for the time of day:

at 5:00    at 11:45    at midnight    at lunchtime    at sunset

on for days and dates:

on Friday / on Fridays    on March 12, 2002    on Christmas Day    on my birthday  
also on the weekend, on weekends

in for longer periods (for example, months/years/seasons):

in October    in 1998    in the 18th century    in the past  
in (the) winter    in the 1970s    in the Middle Ages    in the future

## B

We also use at in these expressions:

- |                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| at night                     | ■ I don't like going out at night.                |
| at Christmas / at Easter     | ■ Do you give each other presents at Christmas?   |
| at the moment / at this time | ■ Mr. Brown is busy at the moment / at this time. |
| at the same time             | ■ Liz and I arrived at the same time.             |

## C

We say:

in the morning(s)    in the afternoon(s)    in the evening(s)

- I'll see you in the morning.
- Do you work in the evenings?

but: on Friday morning(s)    on Sunday afternoon(s)    on Monday evening(s)

- I'll be at home on Friday morning.
- Do you usually go out on Saturday evenings?

## D

We do not use at/on/in before last/next/this/every:

- I'll see you next Friday. (*not* on next Friday)
- They got married last March.

Note that we often leave out on before days and dates

(Monday / Mondays / Monday morning / March 12th, etc.):

- I'll see you (on) Friday.
- She works (on) Saturday mornings.
- They got married (on) March 12th.

## E

In a few minutes / in six months, etc. = a time in the future:

- The train will be leaving in a few minutes. (= a few minutes from now)
- Jack has left town. He'll be back in a week. (= a week from now)
- She'll be here in a moment. (= a moment from now)

You can also say "in six months' time," "in a week's time," etc.:

- They're getting married in six months' time. (*or* . . . in six months.)

We also use in . . . to say how long it takes to do something:

- I learned to drive in four weeks. (= It took me four weeks to learn.)

# Exercises

117.1 Complete the sentences. Each time use *at*, *on*, or *in* + one of the following:

the evening    about 20 minutes    1492    Sundays    the Middle Ages    11 seconds  
the moment    July 21, 1969    night    the 1920s    the same time

1. Columbus made his first voyage from Europe to America *in 1492*.
2. Most people in the United States do not work \_\_\_\_\_.
3. If the sky is clear, you can see the stars \_\_\_\_\_.
4. After working hard during the day, I like to relax \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The first man walked on the moon \_\_\_\_\_.
6. It's difficult to listen if everyone is speaking \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Jazz became popular in the United States \_\_\_\_\_.
8. I'm going out to the store. I'll be back \_\_\_\_\_.
9. *(on the phone)* "Can I speak to Chris?" "I'm sorry, he's not here \_\_\_\_\_."
10. Many of Europe's great cathedrals were built \_\_\_\_\_.
11. Bob is a very fast runner. He can run 100 meters \_\_\_\_\_.

117.2 Put in *at*, *on*, or *in*.

1. Mozart was born in Salzburg *in* \_\_\_\_\_ 1756.
2. "Have you seen Kate recently?" "Yes, I saw her \_\_\_\_\_ Tuesday."
3. The price of electricity is going up \_\_\_\_\_ October.
4. I've been invited to a wedding \_\_\_\_\_ February 14th.
5. Hurry up! We've got to go \_\_\_\_\_ five minutes.
6. I'm busy now, but I'll be with you \_\_\_\_\_ a moment.
7. Jenny's brother is an engineer, but he's out of work \_\_\_\_\_ the moment.
8. There are usually a lot of parties \_\_\_\_\_ New Year's Eve.
9. I hope the weather will be nice \_\_\_\_\_ the weekend.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ Saturday night I went to bed \_\_\_\_\_ 11:00.
11. I don't like driving \_\_\_\_\_ night.
12. We traveled overnight to Paris and arrived \_\_\_\_\_ 5:00 \_\_\_\_\_ the morning.
13. The course begins \_\_\_\_\_ January 7th and ends sometime \_\_\_\_\_ April.
14. It was a short book and easy to read. I read it \_\_\_\_\_ a day.
15. I might not be at home \_\_\_\_\_ Tuesday morning, but I'll be there \_\_\_\_\_ the afternoon.
16. The telephone and the doorbell rang \_\_\_\_\_ the same time.
17. Mary and Henry always go out for dinner \_\_\_\_\_ their anniversary.
18. Henry is 63. He'll be retiring from his job \_\_\_\_\_ two years' time.

117.3 Which is correct, (a), (b), or both of them?

- |   |   |             |
|---|---|-------------|
| 1. a) I'll see you Friday.                        | b) I'll see you on Friday.                        | <u>BOTH</u> |
| 2. a) I'll see you next Friday.                   | b) I'll see you on next Friday.                   | _____       |
| 3. a) Paul got married February.                  | b) Paul got married in February.                  | _____       |
| 4. a) Do you work every Saturday?                 | b) Do you work on every Saturday?                 | _____       |
| 5. a) They never go out Sunday evenings.          | b) They never go out on Sunday evenings.          | _____       |
| 6. a) We usually take a short vacation Christmas. | b) We usually take a short vacation at Christmas. | _____       |
| 7. a) What are you doing the weekend?             | b) What are you doing on the weekend?             | _____       |
| 8. a) Will you be here Tuesday?                   | b) Will you be here on Tuesday?                   | _____       |
| 9. a) I hope to go to Europe the summer.          | b) I hope to go to Europe in the summer.          | _____       |